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ABSTRACT

These guidelines are designed to assist local school districts and their Boards of Education in developing and implementing comprehensive guidance and counseling services in thier school systems. The components of the comprehensive guidance program are comprehensive guidance services, certified personnel, and comprehensive guidance facilities. Guidance services are defined as career and academic planning, personal and crisis counseling, consulting, and program management and improvement. The skills, values, and knowledge for school counselor certification are outlined with accompanying supportive services. Facilities are discussed in terms of space, equipment, materials, and supplies. An overview of the organizational framework and pupil personnel services administrator's role is also provided. Although geographically specific, these guidelines could serve as a general model for those educational personnel responsible for the development of comprehensive guidance services. (Author/HLM)

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GUIDELINES FOR COMPREHENSIVE GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING SERVICES

CG 014712

New Jersey State Department of Education

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In this time of great educational change and complex demands of contemporary society on students, parents, and teachers the provision of quality guidance and counseling for pupils is a vital part of every public school system.

This document represents a beginning toward improving these services in New Jersey and is probably the most significant step taken for the profession thus far. It attempts to define the essential functions of school counselors and provide a model for guidance and counseling services as an integral part of the educational process.

A theme that weaves its way throughout these guidelines is the need for coordinated cooperative functioning of school counselors with the other members of the pupil personnel services staff. These include the school social worker, school nurse, speech correctionist, school psychologist and learning consultant. Such efforts lead to more efficient and effective use of such vital personnel and, ultimately, will have more beneficial impact upon the pupils.

While the implications that these guidelines might have for programs and services in the state are not yet clearly defined, their having a positive impact on pupils and professional educators is highly probable.

Paul B. Winkler

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Guidelines for Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Services

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The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U.S. Office of Education.

Preface

These guidelines are for use by local school districts and their boards of education as they develop and implement comprehensive guidance and counseling services in their school systems.

The intention is to provide districts with a broad conceptualization of the various components of a comprehensive guidance and counseling program. School districts will, of course, mold their programs to meet the particular needs of their community and provide services within the confines of their resources and abilities.

Such guidelines are timely as we enter the 80's—a decade that promises much change, redefinition of values and purpose and perhaps turmoil. School counselors have been and are likely to continue to be confronted with issues ranging from chronic absenteeism and drug and alcohol abuse to attempted suicide. Counselors often serve as a source of comfort to pupils experiencing the effects of death, illness and divorce in the family. The passage of both state and federal laws to identify and provide services for often neglected exceptional populations requires an expansion of the school counselor's understanding of human behavior and repertoire of skills. The growing recognition that all pupils are special in their developmental needs adds to the complexity of the counselor's role.

Beyond these issues, which are identifed with broader social problems, there are changes taking place in the educational area that will require the close attention of the school counselor. New Jersey's recently enacted graduation requirements and their relationship to minimum basic skills testing will necessitate the school counselor's increased involvement in this aspect of the school's program. It will be important for the counselor to become increasingly involved in curriculum planning, counseling of students with respect to graduation requirements, helping to plan remedial programs with those pupils who fail in the minimum basic skills testing and using appropriate community and state agency resources to assist these pupils.

This document is provided to give school districts a model for planning and organizing this important component of a school district's program. An individual district's approaches to providing these services may vary greatly depending upon local needs and priorities. The intention is not to foster uniformity. Rather it is to stimulate self-examination, creativity and rededication to the commitment to guidance and counseling services.

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Contents

Preface i

Introduction 1

Purpose of Guidance and Counseling Services 2
- Pupil Distinctiveness 2
- Compatibility of Goals 2
- Integration of Experience 3

Services 4
- Counseling Services 5
  - Career and academic planning 5
  - Personal counseling 5
  - Crisis counseling 5
- Consulting Services 6
- Program Management 7
  - Pupil information 7
  - Program maintenance and improvement 8

Personnel 9
- Certified School Counselors 9
  - Skills 9
  - Values 10
  - Knowledge 10
- Supportive Services 11

Facilities 12
- Space 12
- Equipment 12
- Materials and Supplies 12

Organizational Framework 13

Summary 14

Introduction

The purpose of the New Jersey Education Act of 1975 (Chapter 212), "is to provide to all children in New Jersey, regardless of socio-economic status or geographic location, the educational opportunity which will prepare them to function politically, economically, and socially in a democratic society (18A:7A4)."

The state board of education, through the New Jersey Administrative Code, has established regulations which require that each school district develop and review annually all of its educational programs. Within that mandate, one of the requirements is to provide "Comprehensive guidance facilities and services for each pupil (NJAC 6:8-2.1 (c) 5)."

The procedures for establishing district educational plans, which must contain both outcome and process goals consistent with the state educational goals, apply to comprehensive guidance services and programs as an integral part of the total educational program.

Implementation of these mandates demands careful definition of key terms. The components of a comprehensive guidance program as defined in these guidelines are as follows:

1. **Comprehensive guidance services** are those which: (1) provide service directly to each pupil for use in coping with developmental demands; (2) help each pupil acquire skills needed for effective independent functioning and (3) help to maintain a supportive and productive learning environment for each pupil.

2. **Certified personnel** are those persons who hold appropriate certification as school counselors to provide guidance and counseling services to pupils based on standards established by the State Board of Examiners.

3. **Comprehensive guidance facilities** are those which provide for sufficient resources in at least three general categories: (1) space; (2) equipment and (3) materials and supplies.

Thus, a comprehensive guidance program can be described as one which has sufficient resources to provide a full range of services to each pupil by certified personnel.

I. Purpose of Guidance and Counseling Services

Guidance and counseling services contribute significantly to the accomplishment of educational goals by focusing attention on three conditions relating to pupil learning and development. These conditions are: pupil distinctiveness, compatibility of personal and institutional goals, and the useful integration of experience. Essential in the design of a thorough and efficient education for each pupil, these conditions warrant considerable attention.

Pupil Distinctiveness

Each pupil is a developing human being affected by many different situations and events that occur in his/her life. Each pupil has a unique potential and individual history. Therefore, even though all people progress through similar developmental stages and are exposed to planned and unplanned learning experiences, the reactions and responses of each pupil remain distinctive. No matter how uniform or standardized the opportunities for growth and development may be, each pupil's experience and perceptions of reality remain unique and influence the pupil's response in a given situation.

Compatibility of Goals

District goals for instructional programs address the developmental needs of pupils, in general, and the mastery of specified subject matter. If the personal goals of each pupil were always identical with the expectations of the school, as represented in the general goal statements, then the educational programs would work in a thorough and efficient manner for all. However, pupils' perceptions of their own goals do not always coincide with their perceptions of the school's expectations.

To make effective use of opportunities for learning and growing, each pupil needs to understand his or her own goals and how they relate to the goals of the school. Each pupil should determine which personal goals the school can and cannot meet and plan strategies that permit maximum use of opportunities to attain those goals both in and outside of school.

Integration of Experience

School instruction is designed to foster learning of certain skills, knowledges, awarenesses and attitudes. However, much relevant learning also occurs outside of school. Therefore, it is important for pupils to integrate their in-school and out-of-school experiences. When such integration does not occur, the full benefit of the total educational experience cannot be realized. Offering professional assistance to help pupils integrate these experiences is a central function of comprehensive guidance services.

II. Services

The New Jersey Administrative Code requires that each school district's educational program provide each pupil "guidance and counseling to assist in career and academic planning (NJAC 6:8-3.5 (a) 5)." Such services are most effective when provided within the context of the pupil's unique developmental pattern, his personal goals and life experiences.

Pupils must be helped to develop their own abilities and to learn to recognize and cope with situational and developmental experiences as they occur. An important function of guidance and counseling services is to help pupils become their own advocates. This will assure that individuals, or groups of individuals, do not suffer from neglect, omission, inattention or mistreatment. Such a function makes the school counselor responsible for assuming an active role in the identification, program planning and provision of services for exceptional populations (such as gifted and talented, handicapped, educationally disadvantaged, limited English proficiency).

School counselors must also provide services of a preventive and supportive nature in response to immediate and critical pupil problems such as alcohol and drug abuse, venereal disease, unwanted pregnancy, attempted suicide, vandalism and violence, chronic absenteeism and potential drop-outs.

Consequently, the guidance and counseling services described in this section are designed to assist pupils enhance their own personal development and to facilitate the most effective use of resources available to them.

COUNSELING SERVICES

The purpose of counseling is to foster in each pupil self-examination, self-evaluation and consideration of alternative strategies so that pupils, through personal reflection, can benefit from life experiences. Counseling requires a non-threatening atmosphere of privacy, warmth and acceptance free from psychological threat. Therefore, counselors must demonstrate a combination of highly developed professional skill, personal concern

and confidentiality. These characteristics will permit counselors to give individualized attention to each pupil's distinctiveness, compatibility of goals and integration of experience in ways that cannot be offered through any other service in the school.

An effective counselor possesses mastery of skills in interpersonal relations with individual pupils or groups of pupils. Such skills may concern, but not be limited to, career and academic planning, personal counseling and crisis counseling.

Career and Academic Planning

This aspect of counseling services includes consideration of interests, past performance, present potential and future opportunities. It involves:

a. dealing with pupil anxiety and confusion about alternatives;
b. helping the pupil seek out personal life directions;
c. clarifying the personal needs, values, and goals and
d. assisting the pupil to establish personal decision-making skills.

Personal Counseling

This aspect of counseling services includes consideration of developmental or situational adjustment problems that may interfere with efficient functioning. It involves:

a. dealing with pupil anxiety and confusion about the immediate situation;
b. providing support for the purpose of guided self-examination;
c. understanding the pupil's own behavior and the consequences;
d. encouraging the pupil to use new self-understandings in future planning and decision-making and
e. identifying and referring the pupil to other appropriate sources of assistance.

Crisis Counseling

This aspect of counseling services includes consideration of extreme emotional reactions that disrupt immediate functioning. It involves:

a. reassuring the pupil that coping is possible;
b. identifying the pupil's obstacles to coping by:
    1. understanding self-perceptions that contribute to the crisis and by
    2. understanding environmental forces that contribute to the crisis;

c. reducing pupil anxiety and confusion regarding both the self-perception and the environmental forces;
d. post-crisis planning including possible referral for immediate or continuing treatment.

CONSULTING SERVICES

The purpose of consulting is to share professional information and knowledge with others who have an important part to play in the pupil's development. This aspect of guidance and counseling services fosters in others an understanding of human development, in general, and the developmental needs of individual pupils, in particular. Others, therefore are able to become constructively responsive to the pupil.

Consulting requires that lines of communication be opened and maintained among school counselors and other pupil personnel services staff, school administrators, instructional staff, prospective employers, student groups, parents and the community at large.

Consulting must be viewed as a significant function of the school counselor's role since it it important to the total educational process. Therefore, school counselors must actively engage in consultation services as a means of enhancing the educational experience for pupils.

An effective counselor must also possess great sensitivity to the readiness of others to use, efficiently and productively, available information and knowledge.

Appropriate consulting activities may include but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

1. collaborating with other professionals in the school community on matters such as current knowledge about human growth and development and adjustment, personal developmental needs of individual pupils, individual readiness and career relevance of subject matter;
2. educating the school community to the purposes, functions and availability of all guidance and counseling services;
3. helping the school district develop and implement instructional programs, procedures, etc. that assure equitable treatment of, and equal access by, all pupils;
4. working with instructional and administrative staff in the implementation of graduation standards as they relate to curricular modifications and remedial program development;
5. maintaining continuing relationships with other pupil personnel services staff to share professional expertise and enhance each others' efforts in working with pupils;

6. actively participating in the identification, evaluation, I.E.P. (individualized educational plan) development and program implementation in the least restrictive environment for handicapped pupils;
7. planning and facilitating preventive and supportive approaches to address current pupil problems associated with chronic absenteeism, attempted suicide, violence and vandalism, etc.;
8. cooperating in the in-service of faculty and staff;
9. establishing relationships with the mental health community for the purpose of professional referral and information exchange;
10. establishing and maintaining relationships with community agencies (such as the Division of Youth and Family Services, the courts, various private agencies) to share professional expertise and to enhance each others' efforts in working with pupils;
11. maintaining contact with, and being aware of, resources provided by various state agencies such as the departments of Education, Health, Labor (CETA, rehabilitation services) etc.; and
12. cooperating with business and industry to facilitate pupils' career planning, job placement and plans for post-secondary training.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Effective program management serves two important functions. First, it assures that vital data will be available to help pupils derive maximum benefit from the counseling and consulting services offered. Second, it assures continuous examination and upgrading of all guidance and counseling programs.

Pupil Information

The purpose of this aspect of program management is to provide pupils, their parents and appropriate professional staff with relevant information about each pupil's present status, past performance and future potential. This information helps pupils become aware of opportunities to increase their self-awareness and to develop skills in making decisions and managing transitions in their lives. Therefore, counselors must provide assistance which facilitates each pupil's movement into, through and out of the district's educational programs and into succeeding phases of each pupil's life.

An effective counselor is competent in information management skills. These include the collection, organization, storage, retrieval, dissemination and use of the following types of information:

a. pupil records, including relevant reports of evaluations by

other pupil personnel services staff, and notations of special pupil needs;

b. materials and media suitable to facilitate the orientation and transition of pupils within and beyond the school experience;
c. a library of occupational and educational information and literature related to personal and social adjustment; and
d. assessment data about each pupil.

Program Maintenance and Improvement

The purpose of this aspect of program management is to maintain and improve the quality of guidance services. Any program that fails to provide for continuous self-examination is sure to become obsolete. Therefore it is essential to provide adequate guidance and counseling services to pupils so that the guidance program is continually aware of changes in the field and looks for improved service delivery models.

To achieve this purpose, counselors need to identify program strengths and weaknesses through evaluation procedures. They also need to review appropriate literature and investigate the accomplishments of similar programs in other districts. Counselors may become engaged in applied research to gain insight and understanding regarding program accomplishments and directions and to communicate such information to the school and community. Such activities facilitate the continuing improvement and development of guidance and counseling services.

An effective counselor is competent in using evaluation and research skills. These skills include basic mastery of the principles of measurement and statistics and aid in understanding and using the following kinds of information:

a. accountability models for guidance and counseling services;
b. state and federal legislation, regulations and guidelines;
c. local goals for thorough and efficient education;
d. pertinent research findings;
e. current professional practices and
f. effectiveness of different approaches to the delivery of services.

III. Personnel

Each school district is required by the New Jersey Education Act of 1975 (Chapter 212), to employ qualified personnel in order to provide comprehensive educational programs to each pupil (NJSA 18A:7A-5g). Accordingly, each district is expected to employ a sufficient number of certified school counselors (NJAC 6:8-4.3 (a)) and provide supportive services (NJAC 6:8-4.3 (f)) needed to implement a thorough and efficient system of free public schools.

CERTIFIED SCHOOL COUNSELORS

Certified school counselors must possess certain skills, values and knowledge. In addition, they also should possess personal and affective attributes that reflect professional commitment, warmth, acceptance and concern. School counselors must demonstrate:

a. skill performance essential to effective functioning;
b. values which foster an atmosphere conducive to meeting the purposes set forth for guidance and counseling services;
c. mastery of relevant bodies of knowledge.

In order to assure professional competencies, certification requirements should be viewed as minimum expectations rather than as evidence of adequacy to perform all tasks related to service delivery.

The following list includes essential skills, values and knowledge that school counselors need to provide comprehensive guidance and counseling services. It should be considered illustrative rather than exhaustive.

Skills:

a. counseling (interpersonal relations):
   - listening
   - responding appropriately
   - interviewing
   - using individual and group techniques

b. consulting (communication):
   - facility with written and verbal communication
   - ability to speak effectively to large groups

capacity to realistically perceive the reactions of others
sensitivity to others' needs, pressures, attitudes, etc.

c. program management (use of resources):
acquisition, organization, interpretation, retrieval, and distribution of all informational items outlined in the previous section
research and evaluation

Values:

respect for individual worth
confidence in behavior-change potential
compliance with codes of professional ethics
respect for other professionals
commitment to professional development
tolerance for differences in life-style preferences
respect for individual differences in readiness

Knowledge:

human development and adjustment
career development and adjustment
research and evaluation
testing and measurement
psychology of personality, learning and groups
history of guidance
counseling theory
basic sociology
cultural differences
legislation related to guidance services
labor force trends and economics
local employment opportunities
local and national educational opportunities
referral resources
school programs-local, sending, receiving

The skills, values and knowledge listed should be used for all pupils. This application is irrespective of sex, age, racial or ethnic heritage, religious preference, marital status, socioeconomic background, past performance, physical or mental condition, academic potential, preferred life style, level of readiness, or political affiliation. The pupil is provided with the maximum opportunity to pursue both short and long range personal goals. Thus, he can work towards becoming a fully integrated person and a contributing citizen politically, economically and socially.

Obviously, considerable time, planning and professional com-

mitment are necessary to make the most productive use of counselor skills, values, and knowledge. Therefore, school counselors' responsibilities must reflect the services delineated in these guidelines rather than administrative and clerical tasks not directly related to these services.

The actual number of school counselors needed depends on the number of pupils in the school district, the special needs of these pupils and the district's own program goals. It is essential that each district provide adequate numbers of personnel for the delivery of *all* guidance and counseling services to *all* pupils. Professional guidance and counseling associations have suggested a ratio of at least one school counselor for every 250 students.

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

As indicated, the administrative code requires each school district to provide supportive services needed to implement a thorough and efficient system of free public schools.

In addition to certified school counselors, other supportive personnel are needed to insure the delivery of comprehensive guidance and counseling services and to facilitate the pupils' access to these services (NJAC 6:8-4.3 (f)). Competent clerical and secretarial staff are needed to perform certain essential management functions. These functions may include keeping communications, reporting, scheduling appointments, preparing special guidance materials, filing, maintaining guidance reference materials and keeping records up to date.

Personnel, such as guidance technicians and aides, other paraprofessional workers, student assistants, etc. may be necessary to complement the delivery of comprehensive guidance counseling services. For such persons, specific job-task assignments should be developed on the basis of explicitly demonstrated competencies and implemented under the direction of a certified school counselor.

A service critical in assuring effective school counselor functioning and program excellence is a continuous plan of professional development. Membership and participation of staff in appropriate professional organizations are encouraged. Professional development activities require that time be set aside and funding provided. The following activities are appropriate: providing for visits to colleges and prospective employers; inviting professional consultants to the school, attending appropriate courses and workshops and maintaining a professional guidance library.

IV. Facilities

To deliver the described comprehensive guidance and counseling services, the following facilities are needed:

Space

Minimum requirements dictate an individual office for each school counselor that provides: privacy; ample working space for secretarial and clerical staff; small group conference room(s) and ample space for use and storage of guidance related reference and other materials, inventory and records.

Equipment

Equipment necessary for the delivery of comprehensive guidance services comprises: typewriters, duplicating facilities, microfilm and microfiche readers, a fire-proof storage facility, basic library materials, storage equipment and space and an individual telephone for each staff member. Access to other equipment such as calculators, keypunch and card sort machines and computers also may be necessary.

Materials and supplies

The counseling staff also should be provided with: basic office supplies; supplies for special guidance equipment; sufficient inventories of tests, guidance-related instructional materials, games, and simulations for personal, vocational, and educational development; up-to-date occupational, educational and financial aid information; current labor force data (both local and national) and other resource materials designed to facilitate personal development and adjustment of students and parents. Where appropriate, materials should be obtained through subscription services.

V. Organizational Framework

School counselors work cooperatively with all members of the school district staff and are closely allied with the other pupil personnel services workers. These specialists are engaged in a variety of related activities designed to support and facilitate the achievement of district goals.

Since organization and use of personnel are ways to provide an effective and efficient school program for students, implementing an organizational model that coordinates all the pupil personnel services is an appropriate and useful framework within which to facilitate the effective functioning of the school counselor.

The pupil personnel services concept places primary emphasis on the interdependence of the three major components of the school district: pupil personnel services, instruction and administration. Therefore, an organizational framework is needed to: (1) promote these relationships among the administrative, instructional and pupil personnel services staff to assure mutual understanding of responsibilities and (2) open lines of communication and implement administrative procedures that facilitate joint efforts toward the delivery of effective programs and services.

To maintain such a framework, districts should consider appointing an administrator of pupil personnel services to be responsible for the development, coordination, supervision and evaluation of the district's pupil personnel services programs and staff. This, of course, would include the school counselors. In districts where the number of counselors is sufficient to warrant the appointment of a coordinator, the duties and qualifications of this position should be related to the demands of the situation. They should also be modified to fit the scope of the responsibilities actually assumed.

It is important that the administrator of pupil personnel services maintain a close working relationship with the district's administrative staff. This will help assure that decisions result in the achievement of the district's program goals. Allocation of resources (program-oriented budgeting), proper use of staff, clear and appropriate administrative policies and procedures, appropriate curriculum changes and plans for the continued professional development of the district's staff should result from such communication.

Summary

Guidance and counseling services contribute significantly to the accomplishment of educational goals by focusing on three key conditions for learning and development considered essential in the design of a thorough and efficient education for each pupil. These are: (1) pupil distinctiveness which recognizes that individual experience and perceptions of reality are unique and influence each pupil's response in a given situation; (2) compatibility of goals that stress the need for each pupil to understand his or her own goals and how they relate to the goals of the school and (3) the importance of integrating pupils' in-school and out-of-school experiences.

Three basic guidance and counseling services, i. e., counseling, consulting and information management, are essential in helping each pupil develop his/her own abilities and in learning how to recognize and cope with situational and growth experiences as they occur. Specific functions and personal qualities are required of school counselors to deliver these services. Skills, values and knowledge needed by school counselors, and professional development for growth, are critical to effective school counselor functioning.

To deliver guidance and counseling services, adequate facilities and an organizational framework necessary for the administration of a thorough and efficient program must be considered. Minimum requirements include office space that provides privacy for each school counselor, access to essential equipment and adequate supplies of both office and professional materials.

The pupil personnel services concept represents an appropriate and useful model to guide the effective functioning of school counselors. The suggested organizational framework stresses the importance of coordinating activities performed by pupil personnel services specialists. This model also emphasizes the interdependence of the pupil personnel services, administration and instructional units in meeting district program goals.

In summary, the goal of the guidance and counseling program is to help pupils examine the world they are creating and the way they define their personal experience. Consequently, the primary objective of the school counselor is to help the pupils to know themselves and the selves which they are becoming.

With this as a focus, guidance and counseling services are an integral rather than peripheral part of the educational process. It is hoped that the use of this document will encourage district personnel to improve their local guidance and counseling services and programs.